

CLAIMS

1. A method of operating a computer system to provide a user interface to a data storage system, said computer system including a rule store storing one or more rules,  
5 said method comprising the steps:
- providing a user interface to said rule store enabling user configuration of said rule store with one or more rules, each rule including information relating to a handler program, said handler program being associated with one or more user requirements and being operable to interact with said data storage system in accordance with said user  
10 requirements;
- receiving a request detailing one or more user requirements;  
responsive to receipt of said request:
- a) searching said rule store for a rule associating said one or more user requirements of said received request with a handler program;  
15 b) running said handler program to interact with said data storage system.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said information relating to a handler program comprises the name and the location of the handler program.  
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3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said information relating to a handler program comprises the handler program itself.
4. A method according to any of claims 1 to 3 further comprising the step of  
25 running a default handler program to interact with said data storage system if no rule associating a handler program with the one or more user requirements of said received request is found.
5. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein said rule store user  
30 interface provision step comprises storing a rule associating predetermined user requirements with a handler program executable to interact with said rule store to introduce a further rule contained within said request into said rule store.

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6. A method according to claim 5 wherein said further rule replaces an existing rule.
7. A method according to claim any of claims 1 to 4 wherein said request  
5 comprises a request to store a handler program.
8. A method according to claim 7 wherein said further handler program comprises a default handler program.
- 10 9. A method according to claim 1 wherein said request contains a rule associating a handler program with the user requirements of said received request.
10. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said rules are expressed in the form of text.
- 15 11. A method according to claim 10 wherein said rules are preparable using a text editor.
12. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said rules are indicative of  
20 a time after which said rules should no longer be applied.
13. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said data storage system comprises a plurality of databases.
- 25 14. A method according to claim 13 wherein said databases are of a different format to each other.
15. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said rule store user interface is restricted to a certain class of user.
- 30 16. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the data storage system user interface is available to a different set of users from those able to modify said rules in said rule store.

17. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said computer system comprises a plurality of computers in communication with one another, the handler programs being run on a different computer to the one that receives said request.

5 18. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said computer system comprises a plurality of computers in communication with one another, the rule store being on a different computer to the one that receives said request.

19. A computer system operable to provide a user interface to a data storage  
10 system, said computer system comprising:

a data storage system;

a rule store;

a user interface to said rule store operable to enable a user to configure said rule store with one or more rules, wherein each rule includes information relating to a  
15 handler program, said handler program being associated with one or more user requirements and being operable to interact with said data storage system in accordance with said user requirements;

request receiving means arranged in operation to receive a request detailing one or more user requirements;

20 rule store searching means operable to search said rule store for a rule associating said one or more user requirements of said received request with a handler program;

handler program running means operable to run said handler program to interact with said data storage system.

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20. A digital data carrier carrying a program of instructions executable by processing apparatus to perform the method steps as set out in any one of claims 1 to 18.

30 21. A method of operating a computer system to provide a user interface to a data storage system, said computer system including a rule store storing one or more rules, each rule associating a handler program with one or more request characteristics, said method comprising:

providing a user interface to said rule store enabling the modification of said rules  
in said rule store;

receiving a request having one or more request characteristics;

responsive to the receipt of said request:

- 5           a)     finding a rule in said rule store associating a handler program with  
              the one or more characteristics of said received request; and  
              b)     running said handler program to interact with said data storage  
                      system.

10 22.     A method according to claim 21 further comprising the antecedent step of  
storing one or more rules in said rule store.

23.     A computer system for providing a user interface to a data storage system said  
computer system comprising:

15           a data storage system;

storing means arranged in operation to store one or more rules, each rule  
associating a handler program with one or more request characteristics;

means arranged in operation to provide a user interface to said rule store  
enabling the modification of said rules in said rule store;

20           receiving means arranged in operation to receive a request having one or more  
request characteristics:

finding means arranged in operation to find a rule in said rule store associating a  
handler program with the one or more characteristics of said received request; and

25           running means arranged in operation to run said handler program to interact  
with said data storage system.